NYBBLES & BYTES

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Newsletter of the Combined Atari User Groups
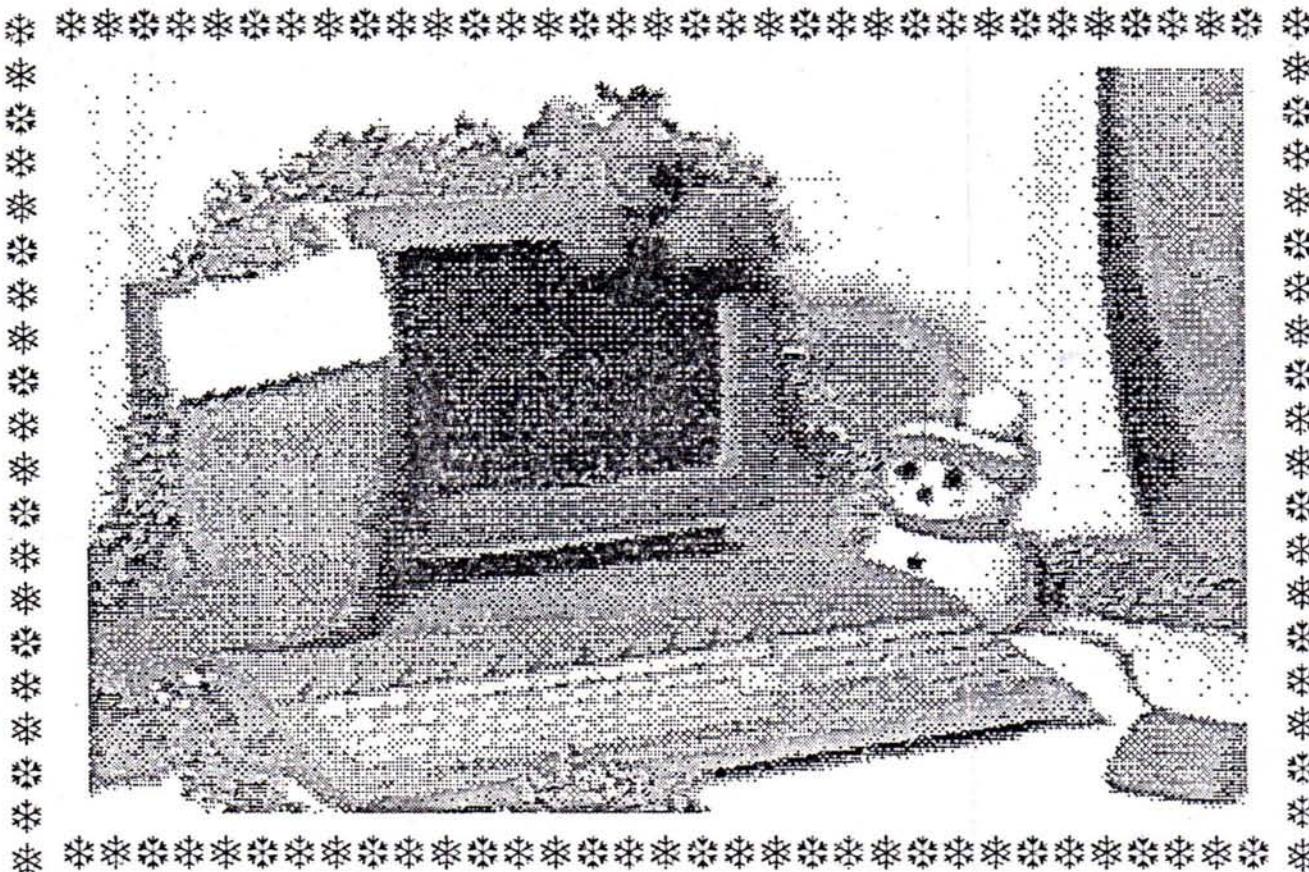
Seasons Greetings !

NYBBLES & BYTES

This newsletter is written and published monthly by the North West Phoenix Atari Connection (NWPAC) and the SouthEast Valley Atari Connection (SEVAC).

Both groups are non-profit organizations devoted to the exchange of information concerning all Atari computers. Neither NWPAC or SEVAC are affilated with Atari Inc.

NYBBLES & BYTES welcomes contributions of articles, reviews, and other material related to Atari computer products. See instructions below.

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CLUB BBS
P.A.U.G.S. (Phoenix Atari User Groups)

NWPAC and SEVAC provide a BBS system for its members at 242-4259. The system is operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. BBS usage is restricted to club members or on an exchange basis with other user groups. For additional information, call either Bill Smith at 934-9935.

New BBS for uploading articles

The newsletter editor now has a BBS dedicated solely to the uploading of articles, classified ads, reviews, pictures, etc. for use in *NYBBLES & BYTES*. This will greatly relieve the problems of uploading newsletter items in the past. The BBS is operated only on Friday and Saturday nights from 10 pm to 7 am the following morning. The number is 265-7849.

All text should be in ASCII format. 1st word is suggested for the ST's with the WP mode off. Atari Writer or PaperClip is suggested for the 8-bits.

Pictures, illustrations, etc, can be in either 8 Bit or ST format. However, keep in mind, that since this newsletter is in black & white, certain color pictures will loose clarity in translation. High resolution DEGAS or Graphics 8 pictures will work the best.

Deadline for copy to be included in the following month's issue is the 15th day of each month.

ADVERTISING RATES

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ATARI MEANS BUSINESS

A REPORT FROM THE 1988 COMDEX

By Anita Malnig, START Editor, Antic Publishing Inc., Copyright 1987. Reprinted by permission.

Las Vegas, November 2, 1987

Atari intends to give the likes of Sun Microsystems and Apollo Computers a run for the money with Abaq (the root word for abacus), the new transputer-based workstation that the company is showing here.

By using RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) architecture, the workstation will operate at 10 MIPS (million instructions per second). The latest graphics hardware and the IMS T-800 -- the Inmos Company's 32-bit microprocessor -- combine to form affordable, powerful personal workstations. A single transputer can deliver over ten times the power of an IBM PC AT. However, there's even greater strength in numbers. You can connect two, 10, 100 or even MORE transputers to create a relatively low-cost computer workstation with the power of a supercomputer. (Talk is that the price will be in the $5000 range.) When attached to a transputer, the ST or Mega acts as the input/output device for the system. Transputers can be linked via a built-in high-speed serial port to form a multiprocessor array or a local area network.

Helios, the Unix-like operating system, was developed by the Perihelion Company in Great Britain, as was the transputer board itself. The Helios operating system encourages the use of many small programs which work together to create a final product. Shiraz Shivji, Atari's vice president of research and development, expects that the transputer will be used primarily in engineering and science applications. Included with Abaq will be a very high resolution monitor, capable of four graphics modes: 1280 X 960 in 16 colors or monochrome; 1024 X 768 in 256 colors; 640 X 480 in 256 colors with two screens; and 512 X 480 in 16 million colors plus overlay. No firm delivery date is set, but late 1988 seems to be the most talked-about time frame. From a first-hand view, the crisp, vibrant graphics (such as four separate pictures running simultaneously) were drawing crushing crowds.

CD-ROM FOR ATARI

The exciting CD-ROM player introduced at Comdex can read up to 540 megabytes of data or play music. It connects to Atari's ST and Mega computers through the DMA (direct memory access) channel, a communications port that transmits data at up to 10 million bits per second. At 540Mb, the player can store more data than 1,000 floppy disks or 200,000 printed pages.

Demonstrated at the show is an English and French visual dictionary from Facts on File. It is categorized by topics such as transportation and food: click on the transportation theme and choose from an array of topics such as ferrys, container ships, airport terminals and so on — all items illustrated. Speech output identifies each image in French and English. Grolier's Encyclopedia also runs on this CD-ROM, as do audio CDs. Atari has a task force at work now developing more products for this player, which will be available at computer specialty dealers and retail outlets in February, 1988, at a suggested retail price of $599.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

G.O. Graphics, in conjunction with Atari, will bring to market a sophisticated desktop publishing program called Deskset. This works as a front end to the CompuGraphics typesetting equipment, offering the use of 1,800 fonts. This is not just a desktop publishing program for four-page newsletters and the like: it could design entire publications such as Antic and START. It will output to such laser printers as the striking Atari laser printer, also being demonstrated with Deskset. (Look for the next Comdex installment for additional desktop publishing programs for the ST.) Deskset, which works only on a Mega, will work within the GEM environment and offers all the standard features of the most sophisticated desktop publishing programs — features such as character compensation, kerning, columns, boxes, rules and the ability to merge text and graphics. Look for this product mid- to late 1988.

ATARI PC

The Atari PC1, introduced earlier this year, can be used as a local area network workstation or as a stand alone personal computer. It runs at a top speed of 8 Mhz, with a software switch to set the clock speed to 4.77 when needed. The PC1 works with any CGA, MDA, EGA or multi-frequency monitor. Maximum color screen resolution is 640 X 350. The PC1 has a 64-color palette, with a maximum of 16 on the screen at a time. It is expected to retail at $800. New to the Atari PC family is the PC2, a dual-speed

page 4

XT compatible with five slots and hard-disk support. The PC4 is an 80286 microprocessor-based IBM PC/AT compatible machine. It has clock speeds of either 8 or 12 Mhz, VGA -compatible video, four AT-style expansion slots, up to one megabyte of system RAM and is ready for an 80287 numeric coprocessor.

Additionally, Atari is announcing "Moses Promise LAN," a local area network that can connect up to 17 PCs using off-the-shelf telephone wire. They will also be developing Moses PromiseLAN adaptors for its Mega and ST computers. Thus, the Mega and Atari laser printer will be able to share data with PCs and Apple Macintoshes.

ST SOFTWARE SHINES AT COMDEX:

At the very crowded Atari press conference at the Desert Inn on Monday, November 1, Atari announced its entrance into the serious business market with an array of multi-user, multitasking products. The Atari booth itself was crowded with exciting products, interested spectators and busy software personnel. Here's a run-down of what we saw at the Atari booth.

MULTI-USER, MULTITASKING

Along with high-quality third-party developers, Atari will offer multiuser, multitasking and serious vertical applications on the Mega using a Unix-like operating system called Idris (developed by Whitesmiths Ltd.). The company, Computer Tools, was and still is instrumental in finding companies whose programs can be ported over from the Unix environment to Idris and porting those programs.

Jefferson Software of Phoenix, is now releasing a version of their Modula-2 Development System for the Mega to run under Idris, offering a powerful language to complement the multi-user, multitasking operating system.

American Network's Cash Register Plus, the first of the multiuser, multitasking applications, is a point-of-sale program that lets you store and search up to 3,000 items. It supports a Star 8340 printer — small to print out receipts -- and an actual cash drawer. It includes a customer and inventory database and backs up all information to disk. It can support four terminals with all cables attached to the Mega. This is expected to be on sale mid-January 1988 for about $700 for all the components.

During your inventory search, you may want to do some word processing. There are several word processors to choose from in this Idris environment. From the Tigera Corporation comes Word Era, a feature-rich, high-performance word processing package on single- and multiuser systems. It has a Wang-compatible interface and document conversion capabilities. Word Era has the features of leading word processing software and more, including a window environment, voice recognition and voice annotation. It can also set up menus in French, German, Italian and Spanish, and supports a four-user system. Available during the first quarter of 1988, the multiuser price begins at $895.

Another word processor is CrystalWriter Plus from Syntactics, providing a library of model documents for frequently used formats such as letters, memos and reports. An organization can define its own "style sheet" for documents. The program has "plain English" commands and can be useful for writers, editors, secretaries, managers and engineers.

Also ported from the Unix world is Lex, a combined word processor and database, from Trajectory Software. Its indexed file structure lets you retrieve the 10,000th record as quickly as the first. You can design your own forms and screen layouts, create short and more extensive glossary items, and do list processing and mail merges. It also comes with a built-in calculator which you can use concurrently as you write or edit. Also available is Lexet, which lets you interface the word processor and database with laser printers. Atari Corp. is handling the networking capabilities through an agreement with Network Research Corp. With FUSION, Network Software will give the Atari Mega a complete set of TCP/IP protocols and allocations which have been tested for compliance with DDN/DARPA Internet Protocol specifications.

MORE DESKTOP PUBLISHING

From Timeworks comes the Timeworks Desktop Publisher ST. Retailing for $129.95 this GEM-based program will offer WYSIWYG display, over 1,200 possible type-style combinations, ability to import graphics, and laser printer compatibility. Desktop Publisher ST will be available in the first quarter of 1988. Soft Logik Corp. announced a new version of its desktop publishing program, Publishing Partner Professional. New features include automatic textflow around graphic

images, automatic hyphenation and kerning, the ability to import documents from other word processors such as WordPerfect, First Word and Word Writer, more fonts and font manipulation. It will retail for $149.95.

From ISD Marketing comes Calamus, a page-layout and typesetting application. It allows outline fonts and vector graphics that until now could only be processed by expensive Postscript laser printers. Calamus uses these features on both the printer and screen. The screen output can be enlarged up to laser printer resolution. The program offers a spelling checker and hyphenated dictionary, object-oriented graphics, chart forms, and font editors using Bezier curves for designing or changing fonts. Calamus for the Mega will be available in December 1987 for $349.95.

MichTron offers GFA Publisher, a GEM-controlled program with full-featured text editor, automatic text flow and paging, expandable font library and an integrated driver for PostScript.

From Migraph comes the supercharged Easy Draw. And Supercharger, a companion product to Easy Draw, makes it easy to load graphics from popular paint programs. While not a desktop publishing program, these two combined products let you create newsletters, reports, brochures, etc. You can work with ASCII files, have justified and non-justified text, use onscreen grids and rulers and output to the Atari laser printer.

LET'S EMULATE
Turn your ST into a Mac with The Magic Sac Professional from Data Pacific. The Professional consists of three products: The MagicSac Plus, the Translator One and the Magic Epson Printer Driver. The Translator One allows the existing Atari disk drive to read and write Apple Macintosh disks and convert data between Mac, ST and IBM PC diskette formats. The Professional is shipping this month with a suggested retail price of $449.95. Typical Mac programs you can run are Macpaint, Macdraw, Excel and Pagemaker.

PC-Ditto is a software-only utility which taps the power of your Atari STto imitate an IBM PC XT. Programs you can run include Lotus 1-2-3, Enable, Sidekick, Framework and Symphony.

WORD PROCESSING -- ALIVE AND WELL
WordPerfect for the ST is out and is called by some the Cadillac of word processors. In addition to a built-in thesaurus and spell-checker, the program has math functions anc can create indexes, and tables of contents. There are also macros, merge functions and onscreen columns. The product is shipping now for about $395 list.

From Microsoft comes the long-awaited Write, marketed by Atari Corp. It handles complex business reports as well as memos and letters. It has all the standard text generation, editing and formatting features such as cut-and-paste,creating footnotes, automatic pagination, different font styles and sizes, and it works in conjunction with the Atari Laser printer.

MORE CAD PROGRAMS
Drafix, from Foresight Resources, is now on the market and drawing critical acclaim. It's identical to the 1.00 IBM PC version, supports pen plotters, and runs on color and monochrome Atari monitors.

Coming soon from Migraph is M/CADD, a professional engineering graphics design system for the Atari Mega. M/CADD outputs directly to HPGL-compatibleplotters and saves in GEM format for output on 9- and 24-pin dot-matrix printers. M/CADD files can be loaded into Migraph's Easy Draw, and you can add more text and either bit-mapped or object-oriented graphics. Suggested price is$499. M/CADD should ship the end of November.

With MichTron's Master CAD, you can produce object in 2-D and 3-D using its exclusive concepts of Projection Planes. It uses pull-down menus, dialog boxes,mouse and very few keyboard commands. Expect to see this in early 1988.

DESKTOP VIDEO
From Antic Software in conjunection with Sony comes a desktop video package. Sony's low-cost 8mm video hardware and Antic's video sequencer software create professional quality 3-D computer graphics videotapes of up to two hours. The Antic software controls nine functions of the Sony VCR, then adds its own special visual effects such as fades and auto assemble/editing. The 8mm video sequencing software (including custom parallel cables) will be available in January 1988 from Antic Software. The Sony video equipment is available from Sony.

MORE GRAPHIC FUN
From Neriki Computer Graphics PTY Ltd. in Australia comes the ZImagemaster, software with a hardware box

to attach to your ST. Hooking up the Polaroid Palette can output DEGAS pictures as Polaroid pictures, And you can hook up a 35mm camera to the Palette. The package yields overhead transparencies and printouts. It will retail for $400.

Antic Software is also showing Spectrum 512, its 512-color paint program, which expands the ST's normally limited palette of 16 colors to 512. Spectrum 512 can load and enhance pictures from existing ST software as well as from Amiga picture files. Available now for $69.95.

Animation comes from Antic Software as well with Cyber Paint, also $69.95. It emulates the functions of a $100,000 Quantel Paintbox -- but for computer graphics instead of live video. Cyber Paint is a member of the Cyber family of desktop video products. Its many features include smooth raster tweening along any 3-D path, professional optic effects with planar rotations through 3-Dspace, and moviola-style cut-and-paste.

MORE BUSINESS BITS

The Informer from Regent Software is a multi-table database with presentation graphics. Easy-to-use point and click functions let you create and manipulate up to four databases at once. You can import graphics from DEGAS and NEOchrome... From SBT comes the Database Accounting Library, menu-driven with options to confirm, change or cancel entries... Hi-Tech Advisors announces Super Sales Pro, a full-featured point-of-sale inventory control software system for the ST. It will accomodate medium- to larger-sized wholesale, retail or mail order businesses. The company will provide free

technical support... From Progressive Peripherals comes Superbase Personal, a relational database, and the Logistik time/project management system... B.E.S.T Inc. offers B.E.S.T. Business Management, an integrated accounting system offering general ledger. Available now, suggested retail price is $395... ISD Marketing, which brings you the well known VIP, now has the MasterPlan financial spreadsheet featuring the GEM environment with pull-down menus, icons, scroll bars and column grabbers. It offers graphics features as well. Also from ISD is an update to STAccounts, the integrated accounting package... From Royal Software comes additional low-cost business programs such as Help Calc, templates for their E-ACalc and VIP. Coming soon will be Inventory Master for $99.95.

MIDI

Hybrid Arts was showing ADAP and ADAP 2, the digital editing system. ADAP2 works directly with a hard disk. Also just released is Easy Score, HybridArts' new scoring program.

NEW HARD DRIVE

In mid-December ICD will ship its new 100 megabyte hard disk for $1,699.

Comdex closed its doors after a five-day convention that attracted more than 90,000 delegates. Exhibitors paid $27.95 per square foot to the Interface Group for space at the show, which Comdex leased from the Convention Authority for 15 cents a day per square foot.

In addition to the plethora of products at the Atari booth was a variety of items scattered

throughout the Las Vegas Convention Center and various hotels.

From Quantum Microsystems Inc., (QMI) comes a low-cost graphics tablet for the ST. The "ProTablet ST" replaces the mouse pointer device with an accurate digitizer tablet and stylus pen. It works with programs such as Drafix, Degas, Easy Draw and CAD 3D. The tablet has a working area of 12.0 x 8.0 inches and a physical dimension of 17.5 x 11.0 x 1.2 inches. It's available now and has a retail price of $395.

"ChartPak" from Abacus software lets you do business graphics on your ST. Create visual messages from raw numerical data. Use clip art or pictures from paintPro or Degas-compatible programs. It's on the market now.

"PrintMaster Plus" from Unison World lets you design banners, newsletters, letterhead and the like. You can create and edit your own work and use art from the PrintMaster Art Galleries. Use multiple graphics on a single page, use different typefaces and styles and print reverse image copies of iron-on T-shirt decals. Available now for $39.95.

From Kyocera Unison, Inc. comes the Kyocera laser printer. It prints 10 pages per minute, gives sharp text, graphics and bar code styles. It has 79 resident fonts, eight foreign language character sets, plus three flexible, user modified Dynamic fonts for typestyle creativity. It will retail for $2,895.

From Knowledgeware (distributed by Michtron) comes "Viva Presents," an interactive desktop presentation system. Through the use of a visual construction set represented by icons, the user can put together

templates to create a visual storyboard for the interactive presentation he is writing. "Interlink ST" from Intersect Software Corp. is an advanced telecommunications package. It features autodialing, automatic redialing, password protected remote access, a text editor, background downloading and more. Interlink comes free with introductory subscription packages to GEnie, Delphi, CompuServe and The Source. Hi-Tech Expressions brings Sesame Street to your children with six preschool computer software learning games: "Big Bird's Special Delivery", "Astro Grover", "Ernie's Big Splash", "Grover's Animal Adventures", and "PalsAround Town." Only $9.95 apiece.

Programs such as "Quantum Paintbox", "Pro Sound Designer", "Pro Midi", and "Pro Drum" come to you from Eidersoft, distributed from Computer Software Services (CSS). Quantum Paintbox offers a paint program with 4096 colors. Pro-Sound Designer is a sound sampling package with 3-3- kHz sampling, record, playback, reverse, cut, copy and more. It retails for $129.95.

Pro-Midi is a complete MIDI sample/sequencer for use with Pro Sound Designer and Pro Drum using samples of real drums can create complex percussion patterns. The last two products retail for $29.95. From the Supra Corporation comes "The Supramodem 2400", a compact model that supports asynchronous operation at 300, 1200 and 2400 bps. It has an automatic answer/automatic dial, two modular phone jacks, programmable volume speaker and a one-year warranty. It is completely Hayes-compatible and retails for $179.95. Supra also has a SupraDrive FD-10, a 10MG removable floppy disk

which connects to the DMA port. It retails for $895. A popular game from a new company is "Dark Castle" from Three-Sixty, Inc. The company was founded in March 1987 by Thomas Frisina, formerly president of Accolade Software. The company will create, develop and market software for theAtari ST series.

This was a successful, busy Comdex for Atari and we at Antic Publishing look forward to covering the products from Atari and third-party developers as they become available. Look for more Comdex coverage in the February issue of the ST Resource in Antic (on sale January 1988) and the Special Issue #2 (Music and Graphics) of START, available February 1988. Individual products will be reviewed in subsequent issues.

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ATARIWRITER+ ALERT

Some of us are horrified to discover that AtariWriter Plus operates from a built-in version of DOS 2.5. That means it formats a 1050 into the alien "dual-density" and can't be used in true double-density or plain old single-density. Well, you can get out of this mess by replacing the DOS on your AtariWriter Plus disk. Yes, even though it's copy-protected and will not show a directory (from

itself), there is a normal set of DOS, DUP, etc., files on the disk. It is a little scary to do it to your original copy, so get someone who has a Happy Modified drive to make a copy and then, write your favorite DOS to the back-up. Don't worry about getting a bad sector error when it writes the DUP.SYS file, as that's a part of the copy-protection. Besides, AtariWriter Plus doesn't use DUP.SYS anyway. I used SmartDOS, and presto, I have a true double-density and auto-density-changing AtariWriter Plus, with no dual-density nonsense. This works on both regular and 130XE versions (You may need to change the name of the autorun file to be usable with your new DOS.SYS.).

More AtariWriter problems!!

Although the manual is very specific about the need to end a file with a RETURN, you probably still forget sometimes - I do. What happens next? When you try to print the file, you get a mysterious "FILE LENGTH ERROR" at the bottom of the screen instead of printing. The solution is quite simple. Just go back and add a RETURN to the end of the file and try it again.

SEVAC SECONDS

By Tim Barr, SEVAC

Hi everyone, I'm back!! Looking back over my files, I noticed that the last time I wrote this column was for the August newsletter. I'm sorry about that, and I will try to be more conscienctious in the future. There should be a report on the Fall COMDEX show elswhere in the newsletter. The good news from COMDEX is that there will be some excellent software and hardware packages, for the ST, that will be released or updated in the coming year. Hopefully there will be some new products for the 8 bit systems when CES comes around early next year. I did notice that Atari has started an ad campaign for the XE on TV. Hopefully this means that the 8 bit systems will not become "orphans", in the near future.

Now to go on to another subject that is near and dear to my heart. That's right folks, elections for club officers is coming up in January. The following members were nominated to for club elected offices at the November meeting: myself and Marc Dyer for President, Martin Young and Tim Hunkler (subject to his approval when he gets back from Australia) for Vice President, no nominations for Secretary, and Lee Whiteside for Treasurer. I hope that there will be some additional nominations made at the December meeting, as I would like to see some interest shown by the membership at large. Because there was no notice in the last newletter that nominations were going to be taken, for elected offices, at the November meeting, a vote was taken to postpone the elections from December to January.

The November meeting had some interesting items shown. Martin Young brought in his Mega 4 ST, that he finally received a few days before the meeting. The blitter definitely improves the speed of some of the programs that are available. We also saw a sample of the pictures generated by Antic's Spectrum 512 paint program. The pictures were almost as good as the Amiga HAM high resolution color pictures, with all 512 colors viewable at the same time. There are rumors, though, of a paint program that has the capability of displaying 4096 colors on the screen. I'll believe that when I see it! Martin also gave us a preview of Word Perfect for the ST. When he has gotten a bit more experienced with the program, I hope that Martin will be able to give us a full demo of this very powerful word processor.

Well, that's all I have for you for this month. The December meeting will be at the Eaton Business Park, 3234 S. Fair Ln in Tempe, at 10:00 am on December 19th. BE THERE!!

1050 DRIVE BLUES
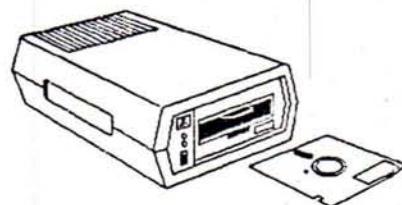
Get a SLOWWWW boot error, or sometimes just can't get the #"!%$&@ thing to read? The most likely problem is *no disk rotation*. This can be due to belt problems, a loose flywheel, or insufficient *squeeze* on the disk. Diagnosing the belt problem is easy once you open the drive. Just look at what is happening when the motor runs. Sometimes the belt is lying in the bottom of the drive. Sometimes, it looks OK but won't stay on anymore! New belts are hard to find, so try buying a small 'O' ring that can replace the belt. If the flywheel center attaching screw is loose, that's another easy fix. The hard one to tell about is when the disk just isn't being squeezed enough by the turn-down handle mechanism to grip and turn the disk reliably.I put a few thicknesses of paper labels under the part that pushes down when the handle is moved to see if it would grip tighter. It worked so well, I haven't gone back into the drive to see if there is another way to increase the grip...but I suppose the paper will wear out someday. Until then......

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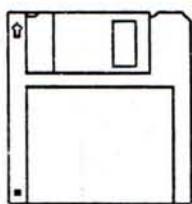
SOFWARE
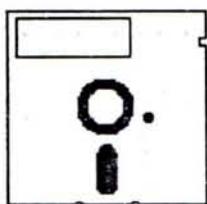
954-SOFT

LARGEST SELECTION
OF ST SOFTWARE

Sofware wishes to thank all of the atari users who have supported us. We will continue to support all Atari computers, with a large stock of 8-bit software and the largest selection of ST software in the universe. Please feel free to call on us for all your Atari software needs. If the program your looking for is not in stock, we will be more than glad to special order it for you.

Happy Holidays to you and your families.

NWPAC & SEVAC MEMBERS: VIP DISCOUNT WITH CLUB MEMBERSHIP CARD
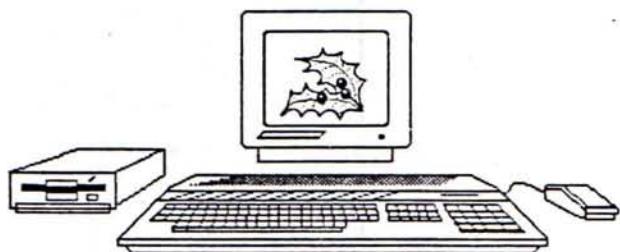
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THOMAS MALL

840-2088

RANDOM BITS
by Dave Thorson, NWPAC

Hi Ho everyone! Lots of tiny bytes of news this month, in the interest of keeping the column shorter. Let's see some more of you get some articles, reviews and helpful hints into this fine periodical. I promise not to take so much space! (I do get carried away sometimes).

First up this month is Colorasaurus, an 800/XL/XE program for those beginning life in a computer world. The program is suggested for ages 3 to 6, but my 2-1/2 year old son LOVES it. What better recommendation is there? The program features three "games" involving dinosaurs and, you guessed it, colors. First is a simple matching game, where colored dinosaurs march onto the bottom of the screen and, using a joystick, you grab them and place them in the jungle of a matching color. At first, the three dinosaurs appear in widely different colors, like brown, green and yellow. As the game progresses, the matching gets harder: different shades of purple, for example. When all the dinosaurs are safely in their own jungles, the ground shakes, the screen scrolls left, and new reptilian dancers strut onto the screen accompanied by some catchy music. If a bad match is made, the program is quiet about it. The dinosaur falls to the bottom of the

screen with no razzes, beeps, crashes, or other sonic bloodshed. I get tired of children's games that encourage failure by making it amusing to do the wrong thing. Colorasaurus never drops to that level. In game 2 you place three dinosaurs into their corresponding jungles, only this time there are six jungles to choose from. The program then juggles the jungles and the young archaeologist must remember which colors contain dinosaurs. Game 3 presents a large dinosaur for painting. You can select red, yellow or blue paint, and only areas within the dinosaur are painted. You can also choose white or black to make different shades of a color, and by mixing colors you can get a wide range of hues. All in all, the program appears to be effective at teaching colors, matching concepts, left/middle/right, joystick fundamentals, task completion, and color mixing. Different ages are sure to get different educations. If only more educational software was this good!

Colorasaurus is by
The Learning Company,
545 Middlefield Road,
Menlo Park, CA 94025.
I picked it up at Sofware for $15, a real bargain for this 1984 program.

Remaining 8-bit news to cover: I will soon send in to

Antic another fix for Creative Process. I've found the problem and am trying to squeeze a fix into available memory. If you have CP now, here's a workaround: while in text mode, you can jump from screen to screen with ctrl/p and ctrl/n. Sometimes this moves to a point in the outline not on the outline screen you started from. If you exit to outline mode at that time, the outline screen is copied over your text screen and you're put back into text mode. Ugly, eh? To avoid losing your original text, DO NOT try again to exit to outline mode. Press SELECT to recall your old text from disk (or ramdisk) and you'll find it intact (sigh of relief). Now use ctrl/n or ctrl/p to return to a text screen from the outline screen you started from, or to either end of the outline.

Another minor bug that graces your screen when you change text after marking the start of a window but before marking the opposite corner will also be fixed if space permits. Antic should have the new version available by Christmas, if they choose to release it. They've been helpful so far....

Speaking of Antic, they've announced a new version of their FLASH tele-communications program for the ST. The upgrade is available for a mere five smackeroos and your

original disk. It now has better internal word processing, supports VT-100/52, and lets you run other programs without exiting Flash 1.5. Check out The Catalog in a current issue of Antic.

Speaking of tele-communications, there's some good ST stuff out on GEnie (General Electric's low-priced alternative to Compuserve). Lots of Spectrum pictures, and a new Spectrum slide show program (SPSLD7.ARC). These are pictures created with Spectrum, a graphics paint program that permits 512 colors on the screen at one time (actually, they are usually transferred to Spectrum from Amiga pics). We're talking near-photographic quality here. Also on GEnie, a public domain communications program called UNITERM.ARC. This program emulates VT-100, VT-102, VT-200 and Tektronics 4014 graphics terminals. It supports Xmodem, batch Ymodem and Kermit file transfers. If you have a monochrome monitor, you can get 132 columns or 48 lines as well. I haven't tried it yet, but if it's a good one, I'll try to let you know in a future RANDOM BITS.

I'm past my space allotment this month, but I want to leave you with a parting bit. Why is it I still like Paper Clip on my 130XE better than any ST word processors? I haven't had the luxury of trying the new Microsoft effort, but nothing else seems to offer the power, control, and convenience of Paper Clip. It seems they all sacrifice quality for ease of use. Am I crazy or has anyone else figured out how to get page breaks where they want them with 1st Word? Is this all a conspiracy to make us think we're happy with whatever results a word processor gives as a default? If you've found a GOOD WP program, one useful for programming, letters to Mom, trip reports, documentation and proposals; one that has an integrated outline processor that treats text as part of the outline; one that incorporates graphics at least on printout; one that provides mouse AND keyboard control of things along with split screens or windows for multiple files OR multiple views of the same file, then PLEASE let us know about it! A shareware program in the MS-DOS world called PC-WRITE does most of this, very fast, for only $89. It's almost worth buying a PC clone just for that program alone. I guess for now I'll have to live with 40 columns and no outliner, but Paper Clip still does the job. What ever happened to Paper Clip Elite for the ST? Perhaps for this month's mail campaign we can all write Electronic Arts and demand the release of this program. Not a rush-it-to-the-market-even-though-it's-not-ready effort, but let's demand the program it can be. I can hold out a few more months.... I've got lots of other bits to randomize while I'm waiting.

A growing number of ST owners and users have been asking about the meaning of those annoying TOS error messages you get when everything does not go according to plan. Here is a verbose listing of the most commonly encountered ones that should help you.

TOS ERROR CODES

0 OK. (no problems)

1 GENERAL error

2 DRIVE NOT READY Device was not ready, attached, or has been busy too long.

3 UNKNOWN COMMAND Device did not understand you.

4 CRC ERROR Soft read error.

5 BAD REQUEST Device could not handle the command, although it understood it. Check your system parameters.

6 SEEK ERROR Drive could not perform a seek.

7 UNKNOWN MEDIA Attempt to read unformatted or foreign media. Usually caused by a trashed or zeroed boot sector.

8 SECTOR NOT FOUND The requested sector could not be found.

9 NO PAPER The printer is out of paper.

10 WRITE FAULT A write operation failed.

THREE GAMES FOR THE ST

Reviewed by Steve Marshall, NWPAC

With the Christmas buying season now upon us, there has been an outpouring of new software for the ST. Much of the new software is of the entertainment variety (also known as video games) including some long-awaited titles. Here is an overview of three games that should become very popular.

First, lets take a look at the graphically stunning "BARBARIAN" from Psygnosis. Other reviewers are hailing BARBARIAN as the finest game ever produced for the ST and liken it to the original Star Raiders on the 8-bit in potential influence. Graphically, it is stunning. The Barbarian and the various creatures he meets are all beautifully rendered and the animation is lifelike, even down to the digitized grunts and yells. Psygnosis, whose earlier BRATACUS was hampered by an awkward user interface, offers a greatly improved and more versatile character movement, giving the player the choice of mouse, joystick or keyboard. While my preference was for the mouse there are times in the game when greater control is gained by use of the keyboard. While BARBARIAN is a graphic knockout, I do have some criticism of the game play itself. First, there is no SAVE GAME feature. This is particularly frustrating when the loss of your fourth life

results in your having to begin from the very start of the program. An additional frustration are the occasional traps which cannot be foreseen or avoided, resulting in a loss of one of those precious lives. A SAVE GAME feature would undoubtedly add to the enjoyment of this game. There is no score in this game, just a gauge that tells you what percentage of the game you have completed. It is perhaps a mark of my frustration that after weeks of playing this game, I have failed to complete more than 25% of the quest and have failed to see some of the more elaborate screens pictured on the box. Another major criticism is the single minded play design of BARBARIAN. The player is allowed very few options, with most of the game generally spent guiding the Barbarian on the only route available. I would have preferred more opportunity to explore. Last, my copy of BARBARIAN housed a number of small bugs, perhaps the most astonishing being the time my character jumped backwards off the screen! Try as I might, I could not get him back onto the screen, although I could hear him him grunting and yelling. Another consistent problem cropped up in ascending and descending ladders, usually when I did not want to, or in getting on

a ladder, an inability to get off! To sum up, first impressions of BARBARIAN were great and its fun to put him through his various moves, but after the novelty wears off, the game play itself is too simplistic and single-minded to appeal to me.

The second game I spent my hard-earned money on is entitled "GAUNTLET". This is a version of the arcade hit that I lost numerous quarters on so I was anxious to see how the ST version would be. Generally, I have not been too disappointed. The graphics are good, very close to how I remember the arcade game. While there are options to play one of four characters (Warrior, Valkyrie, Elf and Wizard, each with their own strengths and weaknesses), the ST only allows one or two players. The two player version is far more amusing, especially depending on your partner. Like the arcade version, the goal here is to amass treasures (and points) as you go from level to succeeding level. At this point I find myself playing GAUNTLET more frequently than BARBARIAN, perhaps because of the two player option and the faster action. GAUNTLET in many ways reminds me of TIME BANDITS, still one of favorite games. If you liked the arcade version, or like fast action arcade games,

PRESIDENT'S PRINTOUT

By Steve Marshall, NWPAC

First of all, thanks to all of those members who assisted Roger Downey, Bill Smith and myself in demonstrating the 8-bit and ST utilities at our November meeting. From the comments I received, I believe it was a very informative meeting and one that everyone seemed to enjoy.

Also, a special thank you to those who answered the call for volunteer help to support various aspects of the club, especially for signing on to help put together the club newsletter, and for assisting Paul Parks with the 8-bit disk library.

Paying dues and attending meetings is one way of supporting the club, but it is far more rewarding when you really pitch in and help with the actual running of the club. While we had several members step forward at the November meeting to volunteer, we still need some help, both with the newsletter and with the magazine library. We'll be asking for additional volunteers at the next meeting. I hope you'll consider helping. I guarantee you'll get a lot out of it, and you'll be helping our club grow.

Election of officers is coming up in January and the following slate was nominated at the November meeting:

PRESIDENT
Steve Marshall (Incumbent)

VICE PRESIDENT
Roger Downey (Incumbent)

SECRETARY
Joe Krysa (Incumbent)

TREASURER
Mike Zachary

Additional nominations will be accepted at the December meeting. Only paid up members are eligible to vote or hold office and elections will be held at the January meeting. There will be a mail-in balleot form in the January Newsletter for those who cannot attend the meeting.

Jeff Wood, past President and current Treasurer of NWPAC, has requested time off from officer duties and is relinquishing the office of Treasurer. We all certainly thank Jeff, not only for his years of faithful service, but for taking the initiative in forming NWPAC back in October of 1983. I don't want this to sound like an obituary - Jeff's not leaving us, just taking a rest - but I think an expression of thanks is due.

For December, we are planning to show the latest in 8-bit and ST software, just in time for Christmas. There is always a flood of software at this time of the year and its always fun to see what's new. If watching software demos is not up your alley, we also are planning to have a programmer's roundtable for both 8-bit and ST. This roundtable will allow members to ask questions about programming and get help in solving their programming problems. This is also the place to show off your programming efforts. Whether you program in Basic, C, Pascal, etc., bring some of your programs along. Maybe you can get some help or new ideas, or maybe help someone else in their efforts.

See you on Saturday, December 12, at Faith United Methodist Church.

STACK, the ST Special Interest group, will meet at the same location on Monday evening, December 14th, at 7:00pm.

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The following is reprinted from the April '87 G.R.A.S.P. GAZETTE

Just think - If cars had progressed over the years as computers have. We'd have a car weighing 2 1/2 lbs., getting 1.285 million miles to the gallon and it would get you across the country in just 3.45 hours.

Contributed by
Jack Barnett

you'll like GAUNTLET. Last, but by no means least, we have the long awaited **MARBLE MADNESS** from Electronic Arts. This game was promised for the ST nearly a year ago, and has finally made. Like the above two games (which I neglected to mention), MARBLE MADNESS is contained on two single-sided disks. For those who don't frequent the arcade arenas in the malls, MARBLE MADNESS is another ST version of an arcade hit. As far as that goes, it appears to be faithful adaptation. The 3-D look has been retained and the action is smooth and fast. One and two player modes are supported, with the two player mode preferred. While you can play with the mouse, I found the joystick to be much better for controlling the little balls as they wend their way around the course. This is a game that belongs in the "cute" category (my kids love it) but I quickly mastered it and became bored with it after a few weeks.

So there you have three "name" games for Christmas. Which one to buy? So much is a matter of personal preference, but if I had to do it over again, I'd go with GAUNTLET for overall enjoyment and playability.

11 READ FAULT A read operation failed.

12 GENERAL MISHAP Reserved for future errors.

13 WRITE PROTECT You attempted to write to a write protected disk.

14 MEDIA CHANGE The media has been changed since the last write.

15 UNKNOWN DEVICE The operation specified a device that the BIOS could not recognize.

16 BAD SECTORS A format operation detected bad sectors.

17 INSERT DISK A request for you to insert disk.

GEMDOS ERROR CODES

32 EINVFN Invalid function number.

33 EFILNF File not found.

34 EPTHNF Path not found.

35 ENHNDL No file descriptors left (too many files are open)

36 EACCND Access denied.

37 EIHNDL Invalid file descriptor.

39 ENSMEM Insufficient memory.

40 EIMBA Invalid memory block address.

46 EDRIVE Invalid drive specified.

49 EMNFIL No more files.

64 ERANGE Range error.

65 EINTRN Internal error.

66 EPLFMT Invalid program load format.

67 EGSBF Setblock failure due to growth restrictions.

CLASSIFIED ADS

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Next NWPAC meeting:
Faith Methodist Church
8640 N.19th Avenue
Phoenix
DEC 12th at 10AM

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Next SEVAC meeting:
Eaton Business Park
3234 S. Fair Lane
Tempe
DEC 19th at 10 AM

★★★★★★★★★★★★★

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